

**Georgia Institute of Technology**  
**2012-2013 Annual Report**  
**Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee**

October 22, 2013

3-5:00 p.m.

Student Center Theater

Fall Meeting of the General Faculty, General Faculty Assembly, & Academic Senate  
including Standing Committee Annual Reports

**Members:** 11

**Meetings:** The Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee met 4 times during the 2012-2013 year. It conducted some of its business via email, particularly in relation to requests for excused absences and athletic travel schedules.

Dr. Craig Tovey served as Chair of the Committee. The business of the Committee is related to academic policy matters and financial matters that impact students throughout their careers at Tech. The Committee also oversees the excused absence policy and travel schedules of teams with the GT Athletic Association.

**The following areas were addressed by the Committee.**

- Review of the excused absence procedure and approval of recent edits
- Review of the excused absence policy to discuss the two different types of absences – events related to academic activity and events where the student is representing GT
- The importance of identifying important topics to pursue so that we are not reactive, but rather proactive as a group
- The following topics were identified as needing on-going discussion.
- What appears to be a growing gap in financial aid – costs are going up and students' ability to pay is shrinking
- Faculty-student ratio in some programs has reached critical levels and if some action isn't taken, quality will likely suffer
- The committee needs to continue its work to make its own procedures and policies more consistent and well documented
- The likelihood of increased engagement of alumni and faculty in making decisions about who is selected for our incoming freshman class
  - Other changes might also ensue such as requiring interviews
- Future of transfer student recruitment, pathways, and enrollment, and possible changes to how, when, changes of major are allowed
- Is there a new policy needed to guide change of major in general?
- Is there a role for SAFAC to play in the Complete College Georgia Program?
- Should the committee review recent reports on academic advising to determine current status, whether there are areas of concern, and perhaps recommend future action?

- Ask the Statutes Committee to review the charge of this Committee and modernize it to better serve the campus and its students (it is likely the charge was created when Tech was much smaller and much less complex)
- Review the class attendance policy and the increased use of clickers or other devices to record student presence in class (this may become an issue at the Federal level as well)
- Ensure a central repository of all SAFAC minutes and documents (see web site at: <http://www.facultygovernance.gatech.edu/CommittMin012-013.htm>)
- Develop a communication plan for making sure that students, faculty, and staff are aware of how excused absences are considered and approved (both for faculty-sponsored groups and individual students)
- Graduate student concerns including:
  - Counseling Center services and the suicide rate among graduate students
    - Making everyone aware of the “hot” email address for the Dean of Students in case there is concern about a student
  - Career services for graduate students, stepping up effort
  - Review and rethinking of orientation
  - Search for new director of graduate admissions and rethinking many related processes

**There was also discussion about the following topics.**

- The idea of SAFAC creating soft guidelines for religious holidays.
  - These would be guidelines and would not represent an official policy statement.
  - The Committee Chair, Dr. Tovey, expressed interest in SAFAC sending an email at the beginning of the term that listed all major religious holidays to assist professors when they are scheduling projects and exams.
- Housing fees are a recurring concern. Committee members are interested in knowing why they are so high compared to off campus.
  - Are freshmen being taken advantage of?
  - Committee members feel that an accounting of where the money goes should be sought out so that we would know things such as whether the additional revenue from the raised fees replaces funding that used to be provided through state appropriation.
- There are some regulations and policies that the Committee would like to review that will be added to future agendas.

Submitted by,

Dr. Craig Tovey, ISyE  
SAFAC Chair 2012-2013